

I Got You (I can get through anything)

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I Got You (I can get through anything)

by [BirbWatcher](#)

Summary

The first time George has a migraine, he's alone in London and miserable. He can't tolerate screens, his parents are out of town, and the only thing that makes him feel better is a golden voice on the other end of the phone

The second time, he's just moved to Florida, and Dream proves that he's a lot better at providing comfort in person

Notes

I'm sick and needed comfort fluff and this happened. It's literally just soft vibes and comfort because we all deserve someone to cuddle us when we don't feel well. Part two should be up in the next few days and features George in Florida :D

Warning: there's vomiting in this fic. It's not graphic but it's there

Title from [So Far Away by Mary Lambert](#)

Happy reading!

My [tumblr](#) and [twitter](#)

Chapter 1

Something strange is happening to George.

He first becomes aware of it halfway through coding a new plugin, and he isn't about to pull himself out of a rare productive cycle to figure out what the hell the heavy feeling behind his eyes is. Maybe he's just thirsty, or needs a break from his screen. Whatever. He'll think about it soon.

Through his headphones, he hears a quiet sigh, and then regular breathing in a rhythm more familiar to him than his own. He glances over to his second monitor, checks the time on the current TeamSpeak call - eight hours, comfortably long, but nowhere near their record. Sappnap dipped out around three hours ago, he thinks. He's a bit fuzzy on the details.

He goes back to Java, keys clacking satisfactorily as he types.

The weird pressure behind his eyes is increasing. George blinks a couple of times, gives his head a shake, and groans when the movement makes the room start spinning around him. He furrows his brow, taking one hand off his keyboard to press long fingers into his forehead, massaging the space above his eyebrows. His head hurts.

His head hurts. Huh. That doesn't happen very often.

In his headphones, Dream clears his throat. "George? You okay?"

"Hm?" George's voice is raspy from hours without speaking. He coughs a couple of times, going back to studying his computer screen, grimacing when the light stings his eyes. He should turn his overhead light on, but he can't be bothered to get out of his desk chair. His flat might be tiny, but his laziness knows no bounds.

"You okay? You, like, moaned."

"I did not moan," George scoffs, scratching at his jaw. "You *wish* I moaned."

"Idiot, I heard you."

"Wishful thinking."

"Shut up, you're so annoying." Dream's voice is tinted with amusement, warm with restrained laughter. George smiles like a reflex. He imagines Dream looking fondly at his computer screen, chin resting on his fist, large hand - one of the few parts of him that George doesn't have to rely on his imagination to conjure up - splayed across his jaw. Maybe his hair is in his eyes, he's talked about needing to get it cut recently, or maybe he's got it tucked behind his ears, head tilted to the side as he answers emails. "I'm checking in on you, you sounded like you're in pain."

"Oh." George hums, scrolling through lines of code. "No, I'm fine."

"You sure? When was the last time you drank water?"

"Five minutes ago," George lies, reaching for the glass on his desk. It's gone warm, he notices with displeasure, but takes a sip anyway, not in the mood to drag himself over to the fridge for a fresh one.

"Liar. Drink some now."

“No.” George takes another sip, ignoring Dream’s wheezed chuckle. Dream does this often, forcing George to take care of himself, and while George might pretend to resent it, secretly he doesn’t mind at all. He does the same, in his own way, yelling at Dream when he loses himself in work for days and forgets to go to sleep. George hates that the most, because then they’re out of sync and his day goes missing without Dream’s constant presence, even if it’s only virtual.

He’s been waiting on his visa for what feels like forever, and sometimes the pressure of it weighs him down like the ache currently building behind his temples, but most of the time he’s just excited. He wants to know what Dream’s like in person, finally.

He’s impatient by nature, and this feels like torture.

He sets the glass of water back down on his desk and somehow misses, not judging the distance between his keyboard and the edge of his desk correctly. Glass shatters, water spilling all over his keys and dripping down onto his lap, and he leaps to his feet with a screech. “Fuck!”

“What?” He hears the uptick of concern in Dream’s voice. “George? What happened?”

“I just - spilled water, like, fucking *everywhere*.” George hisses out another curse, staring at the slow drip onto the floor. “It’s all over my computer.”

“Shit. Did anything break?”

“I don’t think so.” George leans over and grabs his mouse, scrolling through his code. Nothing looks out of place, so at least there’s that. He attempts to mop up some of the water sticking to his keys with his sleeve.

“Good. Go get a towel or something, quickly.”

“You’re not the boss of me,” George jokes, already on his way to the bathroom.

Dream laughs, the sound bright in George’s dark, silent apartment. “Except I actually am, though. You signed a contract.”

“Yeah, but we all know I’m the one who wears the pants in this relationship.” George’s tongue feels funny, too heavy in his mouth, and the room spins around him again when he bends to retrieve the spare towel from under his sink. He has to catch himself against the counter, cracked porcelain cold under his nails. Weird. He never gets dizzy.

“You wish,” Dream laughs, and even with his hands tingling and his head pounding George comes back with a sharp retort, unable to let that lie.

“Actually, *you* wish. We both know you’d rather lay back and let me do all the work.”

Dream chokes.

George grins savagely, not quite sure where the words came from but glad they escaped him anyway. He loves when he catches Dream off guard, knocking him off-kilter in their familiar game of push-and-pull, testing the waters to see who drowns first while the lines between platonic and romantic blur more and more. They’re not a *thing*, but it feels inevitable that they will be. George is just waiting to see when it happens.

Usually, Dream is the one to get George on the back foot, but on the occasions that George gets the better of him, Dream really melts down.

Like now.

“That’s - you’re - I’m not—” Dream splutters, entirely unable to form a complete sentence, and George laughs a little cruelly. It’s alright though, Dream knows he doesn’t mean it like that.

Well, maybe. George is less and less sure of himself these days.

“I hate you,” Dream finally says, his tone filled with an entirely opposing emotion. “Go clean up your computer, I’m not buying you a new one again if it breaks.”

“Aw, but you *would*.” George feels like pushing his luck. He twists the towel between his fingers and pushes off the counter, but as soon as he takes a step the world tilts around him and he groans again, squeezing his eyes shut. There’s a dull ache at the back of his skull, starting to spread down his neck, and the tingling in his hands is turning into pins-and-needles, spreading up his arms like wildfire. He winces. “Ow, fuck.”

“George?” Dream’s voice is liquid gold, concerned and beautiful. George swallows down the thought. “You okay?”

“No,” George grits out between clenched teeth. His jaw feels stiff.

“What’s the matter?”

“Dunno. Feel weird.”

“Weird how?” Dream’s voice is still soft, but his words are more businesslike, like George has presented him with a problem to solve. He’s reminded of when Dream calls him to talk through a work issue, or guide him through the process of his newest video idea, competent and annoyingly attractive.

George apparently has no filter today. His thoughts feel jumbled, coming too fast.

“George?” Dream prompts, and he remembers he’s meant to be answering a question.

“Err.” George gives his head another shake, attempting to clear it, but he regrets his every life choice when his vision swims. He stumbles out of the bathroom and back to his desk, glancing between the towel in his hands and the puddle of water on his keyboard, trying to fit the pieces together to figure out what he’s meant to be doing. “Sorry, what?”

“What’s going on? You sound really out of it.”

George clings to the familiar thread of Dream’s voice. “Um. I don’t know, actually? I just...”

“Feel weird?” Dream finishes for him, and George nods, forgetting that Dream can’t see him.

“My head is fuzzy. And my - my hands are, like. Shaking.” George studies the towel between his trembling fingers and realises he’s correct. His mind feels like it’s fighting through treacle.

He hears the creak of Dream’s desk chair and knows he’s sitting up straight, giving George his full attention. “Alright. Your head feels fuzzy - fuzzy how, George? Give me something to work with here.”

George wants to complain that Dream is making impossible demands, but before he can gripe at him Dream speaks again, his tone softening. “Does it hurt? Like, do you have a headache?”

That question is more manageable. George tosses the towel over his keyboard, figuring that will do

for now, and sinks into his desk chair. “Yeah. Headache.”

“Anything else?”

“Dizzy.” George squeezes his eyes shut. Nausea churns in his stomach and he feels awful now that he’s actually paying attention to the sensations coursing through his body. He’s too hot, which is wrong because George always runs cold. Dream is the one who is supposedly a space heater.

He wonders how warm Dream’s arms would feel around him.

Dream hums in his ear, and George can hear distant typing - Dream is probably googling his symptoms. That’s a very Dream thing to do. Despite his increasing discomfort, George bites back a smile and gives him more to work with. “I feel sick, too.”

“Sick like throwing up?”

George grimaces. “Yeah. And my screen is hurting my eyes, maybe I was coding for too long.”

Dream clicks his tongue. “Is it the light that hurts?”

“Yeah, maybe. I dunno.

“I think you might have a migraine, George.” Dream’s voice has an edge to it that wasn’t there before - something a little like worry, but undercut with something else. George wants to sink his fingers into it and tug. “Can you turn off your computer and get into bed for me?”

He’d do anything for Dream. The thought is fleeting, almost terrifying in its bold truth. George kicks it away and slides down his chair, legs stretching across his threadbare carpet. This flat is falling down around him while he waits to move to Florida. “No.”

“Why not?”

“Because I can’t move.” George closes his eyes. The darkness behind his lids is kind to his throbbing head and he murmurs a low sigh, the tingling in his hands growing hot. “I’ve, like. Lost my legs.”

He thinks he hears Dream stifle a laugh. “That might be a problem.”

“Don’t care, didn’t ask.”

“You need to lie down, George,” Dream says, more firmly this time. “And take an advil. Can you do that? You have some in, right?”

“What the fuck is an advil?”

“Oh, right, British.” Dream types for a second while George scoffs, and then says, “Ibuprofen. Do you have any of that lying around?”

George honestly can’t remember, and going to check sounds like the worst thing in the universe right now. He mutters something unintelligible under his breath and hopes it’ll be enough to get Dream off his back.

It isn’t. Dream is so predictable sometimes, or maybe George just knows him too well, because he mouths along with his next words as Dream says them. “Don’t sass me when I’m trying to help you, idiot.”

“You’re the idiot,” George shoots back, but his words sound funny, like he’s drunk. He’s slurring his speech. Huh.

Dream must pick up on it, too, because he makes a *tsk* sound in the back of his throat that has George feeling hot. “Go lie down right now, George. And turn the lights off, you’ll thank me later.”

“Why are you so mean.”

“I’m literally sending you to bed because you have a migraine,” Dream laughs, his usual vibrant tone dulled with worry. “I’m caring about you, not being mean.”

George grumbles, shaking his head and wincing when his neck hurts. “No, I don’t have a migraine. I don’t get migraines.”

“They can happen to anyone, George.”

“But I’ve never had one before,” George argues. “This is just - I don’t know, too much work, clearly I shouldn’t ever try to be productive.”

Dream snorts right in his headphones, too close to his mic, and that really shouldn’t sound so good but it sends a tingle down George’s spine all the same. He wants to hear that sound pressed into his skin, warm breath on his neck, hands in his hair.

He swallows.

“Are you lying down yet?” Dream asks, and George muffles a groan behind his hand and drags himself to his feet.

“I’m moving now. Are you happy?”

“Yes,” Dream says easily, and George does his best to ignore the way his heart stutters. “Don’t forget the adv— uh, ibuprofen.”

George mutters his agreement but doesn’t go to the bathroom, instead pushing open the door to his bedroom and closing it firmly behind him - he’s sure Dream will forgive him for seeking out the nearest soft surface instead of messing about with pills. Despite his irritation at being forced to move, the darkness in here does make his eyes sting less, and the constant throbbing behind his temples eases slightly when he flops down on his mattress and rolls onto his side.

“Okay, I’m in bed.” He unplugs his headphones and sets his phone down on the pillow next to him, putting his phone on speaker.

“Good. Get some rest, if it is a migraine you should be able to sleep it off.”

“It’s not a migraine,” George insists. “I was just - staring at code for too long, or whatever.”

“Uh huh.” Dream sounds amused, but doesn’t fight him, which tells George more than anything how much he wants George to close his eyes and sleep instead of engaging him in their usual bickering. It’s a weird feeling, having Dream look out for him when he’s got no idea what he looks like, or what scent shampoo he uses, or whether he’s good at giving hugs.

He thinks he knows the answer to that last question. Dream embodies warmth and comfort - he’s got to be the best at giving hugs, just like he’s the best at almost everything he does.

George snickers quietly to himself.

“What?” Dream asks, curious.

“Nothing, just - I bet you’d make hugging a competition.”

A startled silence follows his words. George wonders if he should take them back, struggles to comprehend the lack of the filter he’d normally pull around himself, guarding his innermost thoughts behind a constant shield. He can’t remember why he usually bothers, now. It’s nice to be open with Dream.

After another minute, Dream wheezes out a low laugh. “Okay, you should definitely be asleep.”

“Why,” George grumps, faceplanting his pillow. “It’s, like, early.”

“It’s two in the morning in the UK.”

“Yeah, but it’s early for you.” George grimaces. “For us. I don’t wanna get out of sync again.”

“I’ll wait for you.” Dream’s voice softens. “You need sleep or you’ll feel worse.”

“It’s not a migraine.”

“Okay, it’s not a migraine,” Dream acquiesces, but the hint of amusement in his tone makes George think he’s just humouring him. “But you should still get some rest.”

Even though George would like to disagree, he knows that Dream is right. He flops over with a sigh, curling around one of his pillows and tucking it between his knees so he has something to hug while Dream’s voice sounds pleasant and warm in his ear. “Don’t go.”

“I won’t. I’ll stay right here, George, just get some rest, okay?”

George mumbles his agreement and obediently shuts his eyes. His head does hurt, and he feels warmer than normal, but he thinks that might just be the Dream effect. His best friend holds the ability to chase away all his chilly sadness with just one golden laugh.

He falls asleep to the sound of Dream’s breathing, the clack of fingers tapping on a keyboard thousands of miles away as familiar as if they were his own.

When George wakes, his body is on fire.

He groans around a mouth that feels like sandpaper, instantly wishing he was still unconscious. His head pulses with sharp stabbing pain, spreading right down to his neck and even across his collarbones until he thinks that moving his head might actually crack his spine. His entire body aches, joints burning, and nausea coils tight in his stomach.

When he attempts to lift a hand to press cool fingers to his forehead, he’s trembling so much that he scares himself and lets out a pathetic whimper.

Somewhere to his left, there’s a rustle and a worried, familiar voice like an anchor in his swimming thoughts. “George?”

George tries to speak, but his mouth feels like it’s stuffed full of cotton wool and he can’t form the words properly. He tries again, a few garbled sounds escaping until he manages to force out,

“Dream, *hurts*.”

“Fuck, okay.” Dream’s voice, usually as comforting and welcome as sunlight, stabs into his skull like an angry bee sting. George groans, both hands flying into his hair and tugging in an attempt to distract himself, images of Dream as a bee skittering past his addled mind, just like that one Minecraft video they’d filmed together. He rasps out a delirious laugh.

“George?” Dream sounds really worried.

George attempts to focus, forcing his eyes open into the darkness of his bedroom. “Nothing, just. Dream bee.” He laughs again, then whines when the movement jostles his stiff neck.

“You’re weird as hell when you’re sick.” Dream sounds tense, his usual joking tone coming out all wrong. George rolls over and presses his face into his pillow - there are a few faint sunbeams somehow fighting their way through his blinds and he hates it, his eyes stinging with pain. He squeezes them shut again and lies as still as possible so as not to aggravate any of the various angry places screeching all over his body.

“What’s going on?” Dream asks, and George muffles a groan when the sound hurts his skull.

“*Hurts*.”

“What hurts, exactly? Still a migraine?”

“I don’t have a fucking—” George cuts himself off when his stomach clenches suddenly. Bile rises up his throat and he makes a panicked noise, recognising the sensation even when it hardly ever happens to him. He drags himself out of bed and rushes into the bathroom, bringing his phone with him on instinct, but he has just enough brainpower to hit the mute button before he bends over the toilet and throws up everything he’s eaten that day.

He can hear Dream’s confused voice over his retching, but can’t quite make sense of the words. George rests his cheek against cool porcelain and closes his eyes, focusing on the tone of Dream’s voice, the familiar cadence comforting when he just wants to sink into the ground and let the earth swallow him whole. There are tears drying on his cheeks. Fuck, he feels *awful*.

“George? Did you go back to sleep?” Dream goes quiet, and George hates that more than anything. He kicks his phone towards him across the tiled floor and unmutes himself even though he’s not sure he’s done throwing up.

“Don’t you dare leave.”

“Oh, there you are.” Dream sounds relieved. “What happened?”

George closes his eyes again when the room spins around him. “Threw up.”

“Oh, Georgie.” Dream makes a sympathetic sound, and normally that nickname irritates George, or at the very least winds him up, because Dream sounds so *fond* when he says it that it kind of makes George want to squish him. But right now, he basks in it, soaking up whatever affection Dream gives him.

“Did you manage to take an advil?” Dream asks after a moment, and George squints because he sounds different to earlier, more echoey, and there’s a distant clatter that he can’t quite place.

“Where are you?”

“Kitchen,” Dream says easily. “Making dinner. Did you take an advil - or, what was it, ibuprofen?”

“No.” George doesn’t have the strength to lie. He squints at his phone, bracing himself when the light burns his eyes, and is surprised to see that it’s only six in the morning. One am is a normal dinner time for Dream, but George feels disorientated, as if he’s been asleep for decades but no time has passed at all. Nothing quite feels real.

Dream *tsks* him again, and George would bristle but he doesn’t have the energy. “Take one now. You’re in your bathroom, right?”

“Yeah.”

“Find your pills, but be careful with water if you’ve just thrown up. You don’t want to irritate your stomach.”

George wonders why it feels so nice to have Dream talking him through the basic steps to take care of himself. He hauls himself up onto his knees, scrabbling in his cabinet until he finds the right pills and a glass that he fills with water from the bathroom sink. Once he’s swallowed the right dose, he flops down onto the floor and falls face-forward, pressing his forehead to the cool tiles. He’s sweaty and disgusting and everything hurts.

Briefly, he contemplates calling his parents, but then he remembers that they’re out of town visiting his grandparents this week. He groans softly, wishing he had someone to put him back to bed and stroke his hair and bring him food when he feels like he can stomach something again.

“George?” Dream picks up on his discomfort straight away, as tuned in as ever. George thinks he might actually be telepathic. “What’s wrong?”

George contemplates hiding the truth, but ultimately decides he doesn’t have the strength. There are still tears clinging to his lashes and he wants to give himself over completely for once, to relinquish all his usual barricades and let someone else take over for a bit. If he’s going to trust anyone with his most vulnerable side, it would be Dream. “My parents aren’t here.”

“Your parents?”

“Yeah. I was gonna call my mum, ask if she’d come over, but they’re away.” George squeezes his eyes shut in frustration, hating how weak his voice sounds. “I need a hug.”

“Aw, darling.” Dream’s voice cracks. George freezes - the pet name, that’s new, they’ve never done that before. There’s been the odd *baby* before, rarely, slipped out in the midst of teasing when they push slightly too far, but he’s never heard Dream call him something so tender in such a gentle tone.

His heart squeezes between his ribs.

“Did you take your meds?” Dream asks, and George clings to his voice like an anchor while he drowns.

“Yeah.”

“That’s really great, George. Do you think you can get back into bed now? Curl up with your blankets in the dark?”

George contemplates. He’d like to stay horizontal, but his bed does sound objectively better than the bathroom floor, and blankets would feel nice on his overheated skin. Not as nice as someone

else's skin, warm arms around him while he sleeps on Dre— someone's chest, but certainly more comfortable than cold tiles.

But George still grumbles. "Don't wanna move."

Dream makes a low, soothing noise in the back of his throat. "Can you - hold on. What?" His voice grows distant, like he's put his phone down, and George hears another faint voice on the other end of the line. He frowns at the thought of Dream's attention being elsewhere in his hour of need.

"It's George," Dream says. "He's got a migraine - yeah, I don't think he's gonna be streaming tonight, sorry."

The faint voice in the background sounds disappointed, and George finally places who it is. He groans louder. "Tell Sapnap I'm literally dying and to go play stupid Valorant with stupid Punz instead."

Dream muffles a laugh. "Did you hear that?"

"Yes," Sapnap's familiar voice huffs, coming closer. "George, you big baby, what the hell is wrong with you?"

"I'm *dying*," he rasps, his words still slurred, and Dream interrupts before he can continue.

"Leave him alone, Nick, he really is - yeah, it's a migraine, we need to let him rest."

"Not a fucking migraine," George mumbles, but he's not sure they can hear him. Listening to them both occupying the same space scratches at his rubbed-raw skin, loneliness settling like a rock in his gut.

He hears Sapnap heave a sigh. "Feel better, George. Go lay in a dark room."

"I've got him," Dream reassures, and something about the way he says that sends a tingle down George's spine. He sounds confident, like the words belong in his voice, almost possessive. George imagines his lips shaping them, what his mouth looks like, the cut of his jaw and the colour of his eyes. George might be colourblind, but he's sure Dream would look perfect in any light.

Dream's got him. Why does that make George feel so safe?

"Okay, Georgie." Dream's moving again, he can hear the acoustics shift, and somehow knows that he's walking down the hall towards his bedroom. "Time to get back in bed. Sit up for me, hm?"

George groans. "That sounds awful."

"I'm sorry, sweetheart, but you've gotta move or you're gonna spend all night on the bathroom floor."

Sweetheart. George's breath catches in his throat. He thinks about asking Dream how he knows George's current location considering that he hasn't had his camera on all day, but he figures if he knows exactly which part of the hall Dream's walking through in a house he's never visited, then it isn't exactly beyond reason that Dream can do the same for him. He forces himself upright, grimacing when his stomach churns and the room tilts dizzily around him. "Ugh, I *hate* this."

"You can do it, baby."

“Are you calling me cute names to try and get me to move?” George jokes, but with his words still slurring and his tongue feeling fuzzy he doesn’t think he quite gets to the lighthearted tone he’s aiming for. Still, he doesn’t take the words back, wanting to sink into Dream’s affection for as long as he’s allowed.

Dream chuckles. “Is it working?”

“I’m leaving my bathroom right now, so yeah, maybe.” George swallows, daring to ask for more while his walls have been neatly removed by his raging headache. “Test the theory, keep doing it.”

“Now you’re just fishing for compliments, darling.”

George bites his lip. The endearment sounds so perfect in Dream’s voice, said just for George, *about* George, and he thinks he could get used to the way his chest glows in response. He takes a couple of steps down the hall. “Just a few more metres.”

“Feet,” Dream corrects, and George groans.

“Stop being so fucking American, with your *advil* and your *feet*—”

“Don’t hurt your head when you’re sick, babe,” Dream interrupts, and George melts a bit. Maybe. He usually likes to fight back, to be the one riling Dream up until he’s all flustered and off balance, but something about this is nice right now when his entire body hurts and he just wants a hug.

Dream can be a metaphorical hug, probably.

“Okay, I’m at my bedroom door,” George mumbles, twisting the handle, and winces when the sunlight is brighter through his blinds than it was when he ran for the bathroom. He lets out a muffled groan and throws his arm across his eyes. “*Ow*, fuck.”

“What’s wrong, honey?”

George doesn’t even comment on the continued pet names. “Sunlight. *Ow*, make it stop.”

“I would turn the sun off for you if I could, George, but sadly I don’t have that kind of power outside the SMP,” Dream hums, amused but soft.

“Then what’s the point of you,” George grumps, no ire behind his words.

“It’s okay, just go and close your blinds and then you can curl up all safe in your bed, yeah?”

George knows, objectively, that Dream is right, but the thought of climbing back into his pile of blankets and pillows all alone makes him want to cry. Loneliness has been his constant companion ever since Sapnap moved in with Dream and George was left on the outside, but he feels it so much more strongly while his body aches and his head is on fire. He swallows around a dry lump in his throat, hating how needy being sick makes him feel, how he wants to wrap his fingers around the bond he shares with Dream and tug and tug until it finally comes free. He doesn’t want ambiguity, he wants *comfort*.

He snuffles, much to his mortification.

Dream’s tone instantly shifts. “George? Hey, what’s wrong, do you feel worse?”

“No.” George’s voice sounds thick with unshed tears and he hates it. He scrunches his face up and forces himself to cross his room, tugging the blinds shut all the way. He almost cries when his

room is plunged back into velvety, welcome darkness. “I just—”

His breath hitches pathetically and he cuts himself off.

“George—”

“Honey,” George says before he can stop himself.

Dream pauses for an agonisingly long second.

George reconsiders every choice he’s made in life so far to lead him to this moment and contemplates how easy it would be to delete himself.

Then Dream’s voice sounds again, low and soothing through his phone speakers. “George, honey. Tell me what you need.”

And now George really *could* cry. He presses the heels of his palms into his eyes, easing some of the pressure in his skull, and attempts to get a handle on himself. His emotions feel too big, too exposed, his skin rubbed raw and his layers of defensive walls stolen away from him. Something about Dream calling him pretty names in his pretty voice strips George of what little decorum he has left.

He lets out a small sob. “I need a *hug*.”

“Oh, baby.” Dream coos, and it might have put George’s back up in a normal situation but right now he just sinks into it. “I’d be there in seconds if I could.”

“Y-you would?”

“Yeah, of course.”

“You’d hug me?” George checks, unsure if he’s dreaming. The world feels kind of fuzzy, he might be in a fever mirage or something.

Dream lets out a soft laugh, gentle and fond. It’s one of George’s favourite sounds in the world, Dream’s laugh, especially when he really lets go and loses himself completely. Tea kettle laugh, the fans call it. George thinks they’re onto something.

Dream kettles a lot around him.

“Get into bed, George.”

“Will you hug me?” George challenges, refusing to let it go until he’s got his answer.

“If you get into bed, I’ll tell you,” Dream counters.

George purses his lips, annoyed that Dream might win this round. Everything between them is a competition, and he loves it, thrives off it, knows that Dream pushes him to be better, to give all of himself when his natural tendency is to hold back.

Dream hasn’t led him wrong yet. He gets into bed.

“Okay, I’m flat,” George announces, proud of himself.

“Congratulations,” Dream snorts, and George fleetingly wishes he was wearing his headphones so he could hear that voice breathed right into his ears. As it is, he places his phone on his pillow

right by his ear again and curls up in a ball, his skin hot and his head and neck burning bright with pain.

“Tell me you’ll hug me.”

“Are you sure you really want me to?”

“Why are you asking me *now*?” George complains. “You’re always threatening to cuddle me as soon as I get there—”

“*Threatening*?” Dream says incredulously.

“Shut up, you know what I mean.” George squeezes his eyes shut. “My head hurts. And you are a bit threatening when you get all physical with me.”

“I don’t actually know what to say to that,” Dream huffs after a moment. “I’m not trying to make you uncomfortable—”

“Oh my god. You’re not. Idiot.” George cannot think clearly enough for this. He wishes Dream would fix his telepathic link so that he can read George’s mind without him having to put his thoughts into actual coherent sentences. “Just. Ugh. I feel bad and I’m alone and this *sucks*, fix it.”

Dream’s quiet for a moment, just breathing, and George falls into the familiar sound like a magnet drawn to its pair. He hears Dream clear his throat once, twice, almost like he’s *nervous*.

Why would he be nervous? He’s not the one dying.

“I wanna make you feel better,” Dream says eventually, gentle and soothing but still oddly tense. “But you - George—”

“Honey,” George corrects again, and Dream draws in a shaky breath.

“Honey. This is what I’m worried about. You’re kinda scaring me, because you’re like, really sick, and I can’t see you or - or, put my hand on your forehead to make sure you’re not feverish, or make you eat some of this soup I made because it’s what I’d cook if you were here with me and feeling ill, and it’s scaring the crap out of me that you - you want me to hug you and call you pet names? When normally you’d be fighting me every step of the way, or at the very least you’d be *pretending* to hate it even if we both know you don’t.”

George digests that silently for a few minutes. His head really does hurt too much for this, but at least he understands Dream better than his own thoughts and can read him even when his brain feels like it’s trying to climb out of his ears.

“I’d take some soup,” he murmurs finally, voice muffled by his pillow.

Dream chokes out a laugh. “Is that all you’re gonna give me? After I spilled my guts to you?”

George snickers at his turn of phrase. “I was the one throwing up just now, not you.”

“That’s not what I *meant*, baby, please.”

George bites his lip when Dream calls him an endearment without him having to ask. He folds himself in half trying to reach his phone without moving his head, grimacing when every jostle makes his neck burn and his head spin, but he finally retrieves it and switches to a video call, lashing out with one hand to hit his bedside lamp until it turns on the lowest setting. He’s never

been so grateful for his coloured bulbs.

Dream makes a choked noise when George's camera comes on. George grimaces at his own face - sweaty and pale, his brown hair sticking to his forehead, eyes puffy and squinted almost shut in an effort to shield himself from the light.

"What are you *doing*, idiot?" Dream berates him breathlessly. "You have a fucking *migraine*, don't turn your lights on—"

"I feel better since you made me take the pills," George lies. He doesn't think the medicine has had time to take effect yet, but he's determined to get rid of the unfamiliar edge to Dream's tone. "And you were worried that you couldn't see me, so here. Look. I'm not dying."

"I dunno, you kinda look like shit."

"Don't be *mean*," George gripes, rolling over and propping his phone up next to him so he doesn't have to hold his arm up. His shoulder aches even after just a few seconds and he turns his head just enough to give Dream his best pathetic puppy-dog eyes, knowing he doesn't have to try very hard to make himself look needy and cuddle deprived.

It works. Dream muffles a groan. "Did you put your camera on to break me by looking cute?"

George shivers at that word. "You think I'm cute?"

"Now really isn't the time for this, sweetheart."

"Yes, it is," George says stubbornly, closing his eyes against the sting of the light. He succumbs to his aching body and loses the last shred of dignity he's been clinging to in favour of getting Dream exactly where he wants him. "Look at me, I'm dying, you *can't* keep refusing to tell me you'd hug me if you were here. Or I was there. Whatever."

"You *are* trying to manipulate me by being adorable, aren't you?" Dream accuses.

George just groans and shoves his face in his pillows. "Fine. Forget it. You're the worst."

"George, baby." He hears rustling sheets and thinks, Dream is in his bed right now. If he imagines hard enough, maybe he can pretend they're really laying beside each other instead of on the phone separated by thousands of miles and an entire fucking ocean, so he can finally know how it feels to have Dream's big hands stroking through his hair. Dream seems to have a thing for his hair, after all, or George hopes he does and it's not all part of an ongoing bit.

"Of course I want to hug you," Dream says finally, and George kind of wants to hit him for dragging this out for so long. "But I'm half-convinced you're delirious right now and I don't think you'd be saying any of this if you didn't have a migraine."

"I don't have a fucking migraine," George responds immediately.

Dream sighs, exasperated.

"And even if I did, migraines don't make you, like, drunk," George continues to complain, hissing through his teeth when his head throbs. "I'm not - I'm just saying stuff I've been thinking about forever. And you're being mean when I'm sick and alone and I—" he loses his train of thought, trying to chase the thread back to his original point, but it's gone, scattered somewhere among the fire raging through his skull. He groans. "Ugh. Forget it. Everything *hurts*, fuck."

“You need to turn your lights back off,” Dream says softly.

George sort of wants to cry. Dream doesn’t even want to *look* at him.

But then Dream says something that changes his mood in seconds.

“If I was there, I’d turn them off for you and tuck your face into my chest and cuddle you until you feel all better, honey.”

What little remains of George’s thinking power screeches to a halt.

He whines, actually *whines* into his pillow when Dream finally says what he’s been hankering for all night, and his heart flops over and his skin tingles when he thinks about his face in Dream’s chest, Dream’s arms around him, holding him while he feels like he’s falling apart. He shifts his head just enough to mumble, “Are you just saying that to shut me up?”

“*George.*” Dream lets out a huff, annoyed but somehow still fond in that way that makes George feel powerful. He could push Dream right to his limits and Dream would still cave for him. “Will you stop being so difficult?”

“*I’m* difficult?”

“Yes,” Dream grunts. “You are. Now turn off your lights and actually fucking *listen* to me for once, if you’re making us do this now then I’m gonna say my full piece.”

George swallows, his mouth going dry. He turns off the lamp.

“You are actually *so annoying*,” Dream scolds him, and George makes a noise of complaint but Dream steamrolls right over him, his voice growing louder and crackling from George’s phone speakers. He wishes more than ever that he had his headphones, but he thinks his brain might explode if he tried to put them back in. “You pushed me away every time I’ve tried to talk this through with you before, so I just figured, alright, we’ll wait until you’re here then, even if that feels like fucking torture. But that’s fine, I can deal with waiting. I’ll wait for you for as long as it takes.”

Something about those words rubs George raw.

“But *now*,” Dream huffs, exasperated. “The first sign of feeling bad and you completely fall apart on me. And now all my plans have changed again.”

Plans, George thinks. No plans currently, but plans can change. His have, he’s pretty sure, and he can’t place his finger on exactly when that happened, but he knows what he wants and he knows who he wants to give it to him.

“You’d be falling apart if you felt as bad as I do right now,” George rasps, attempting to defend himself.

Dream snorts. “I’ve had migraines before, George.”

“This isn’t a migraine.”

“*Why* are you such an idiot, oh my god. So fucking stubborn.”

“You’re supposed to be hugging me,” George complains, because his brain is stuck and he can’t quite comprehend what he thinks Dream is trying to tell him. “And calling me pet names.”

“Not until I’ve said my piece.”

“You’re not done?”

“Not even close,” Dream quips, and George’s stomach tightens in a knot. He falls obediently silent.

“You want me to hug you, that’s fine,” Dream continues, each word falling like cool rain over George’s overheated skin. “I wanna hug you too. I’ll wrap you in my arms and let you sleep on my chest and feed you soup whenever you’re sick, but I’m not gonna stop when you feel better again, and that’s what I need you to understand. If we’re doing this, then you can’t stop me from holding your hand and kissing you silly on normal days too.”

George feels his soul start to leave his body.

“You want the pet names and the cuddles, baby, then you have to take the rest of me too,” Dream finishes with his usual flourish. “And if you don’t want that, then that’s also fine. You’re still my best friend. But you’ve gotta pick one, because I can’t cope with only getting to have you like this when you’re scared or sad or lonely.”

George bites down hard on his lower lip. There’s so much happening inside him that he struggles to understand all the different sensations, to separate the way his heart is fluttering from the nausea churning in his stomach, the way his chest floods with warmth from the way his head is on fire. He chokes out a laugh. “How long have you been practising that speech for?”

“Longer than I care to admit,” Dream confesses easily, and George wonders how vulnerability always comes so naturally to him. Dream wears his heart on his sleeve. George should take care of that, he realises, he should protect Dream from this world that wants to hurt him and let him know that George won’t ever be one of the people who takes advantage of him.

He thinks Dream already knows, but it can’t hurt to say it out loud while all his defences are down.

“Okay,” he says easily, eyes falling shut. His neck hurts when he adjusts his position on his pillow.

“Okay?” Dream repeats, sounding confused. “What does that mean?”

“It means okay.” George scrunches his face up when his head throbs. “We can do the - the hand holding and the kissing thing too. When I’m better. Just keep - keep calling me pet names and telling me about how you’d hug me right now, because I feel fucking *awful*.”

A charged silence falls between them.

“Are you kidding me?” Dream finally explodes, so loud that he blows his mic. “Seriously? *That easy?!?*”

“What?”

“Are you telling me that we could have - I could have said that to you months ago and you’d have just - said *okay?!?*”

George almost wants to laugh. “It’s not my fault you’re a coward and never brought it up.”

“Yes it is!” Dream is almost yelling, but George can hear the smile in his voice and he thinks Dream is pressing a hand to his mouth, because his voice sounds muffled but so, so happy. George’s chest glows in response. “You’re so - oh my god, I *hate* you.”

“Why do you wanna kiss me if you hate me?”

“George, I swear to god—”

“Baby,” George interrupts. “Or honey. Or - or any of the others, just - pet names while I feel awful, please.”

“Sweetheart,” Dream settles on, his voice bright like sunshine, like golden heat. “Darling. You’re the biggest idiot I’ve ever met in my life.”

George croaks out a noise of complaint.

“You always freak out when I try and bring stuff like this up,” Dream says, and George furrows his brow because that’s incorrect, actually, and he thinks he should inform Dream that he’s wrong. It seems vitally important for some reason that he can’t quite grasp.

“No, I don’t.”

“Are you kidding?”

“I don’t freak out,” George insists stubbornly. “I just - I was waiting for you to read my mind.”

There’s a moment of quiet before Dream groans. “*What?*”

“It’s like—” George whines when his head throbs, one hand flying into his hair, tugging at his scalp in an effort to soothe the pain. “God, I’m too sick for this.”

“You’re the one who wouldn’t let me drop it.”

“Because I *need a hug* and you wouldn’t give me one.”

“I’m giving you all the hugs,” Dream disagrees, his voice warm, cocooning George in comfort and safety. “Virtually, for now, but once you get your visa then you’re getting all of them.”

“All of them?”

“Every one.”

George is pretty sure that makes no sense, but he’s too happy to care. He squints through the darkness to where his camera is still turned on, his face no more than a shadow in the lack of light, but he likes the thought that Dream is in there, living in his phone and on the other side of the world. “I wasn’t freaking out when you brought this up before. I was just - overwhelmed.”

“Overwhelmed.”

“Yeah. By how you make me feel.”

Dream draws in a sharp breath.

“It’s a lot to lose,” George mumbles, giving in to the pain stabbing at the base of his skull and closing his eyes again. “You’re a lot to lose. I didn’t wanna risk it.”

“You’re not gonna lose me, honey.”

George smiles like a reflex. “Should have known. You’re obsessed with me.”

Dream splutters, and George laughs, but quickly groans when his neck and jaw burn with the movement. He really does feel awful, his joints aching and his stomach roiling, nausea climbing up his throat. He thinks he could throw up again, but he doesn't want to drag himself to the bathroom to try. He wants a massage and a hug and a cool cloth pressed to his forehead.

But he's still alone, even if Dream is making a valiant effort to make him forget that.

"Okay, darling," Dream soothes, his voice so tender that it almost hurts to hear. "You're gonna have to sleep the rest of this off. I promise you'll feel better when it eases, but until then you've gotta stay in the dark with your eyes closed and get as much rest as you can, okay?"

"Boring," George mutters, but he doesn't think he could tolerate looking at a screen right now if he tried.

"I know, trust me. Migraines suck."

"Still don't think this is a migraine."

"You're wrong," Dream says casually, ignoring George's indignant squawk. "But I'll fight you on it when you're better. You can hardly form a sentence right now."

"You're the worst, ugh."

"Uh huh," Dream sounds amused. "Stop talking now and get some sleep, okay? We can sort everything out when you're better, but I've already overstimulated you and now you've gotta stay quiet and in the dark to recover."

Panic floods George's chest. "You're not gonna leave, are you?"

"No, baby, of course not," Dream soothes, and George relaxes. "I'll stay right here on the phone. You just start talking to me again when you've slept it off, alright?"

George can get behind that. He folds himself around a pillow, tucking it between his knees and wrapping his arms around it, pretending it's a warm body instead. It's a poor substitute, but with Dream's breathing as regular as always filling his ears, George can almost pretend.

"Hug me," he mutters for good measure, and hears Dream wheeze out a quiet laugh.

"Always. I've got you all tucked up against my chest, okay? You can hide your face in my neck and I'll stroke your hair until your headache goes away."

That sounds so nice that George melts into the mattress. He concentrates, trying to imagine it, wishing he could manifest fingers scratching at his scalp and warm, strong arms wrapped around his back through sheer desire alone. The emotion is strong enough, sitting behind his ribs until he can hardly breathe.

"Go to sleep, sweetheart," Dream murmurs, and George drifts into an unsettled doze with the sound of Dream's quiet breathing filling his ears.

It takes two full days for George's migraine to subside.

He spends most of that time asleep, drifting between dozing and vague awareness, only surfacing for trips to the bathroom and to tug his blinds firmly closed when the sunlight tries to invade his

protective den. He forms a cocoon out of his blankets and burrows himself right in the centre of his bed, pulling off his shirt so just the soft fleece of his favourite blanket brushes his skin, much less of a sensory nightmare when his entire body hurts.

The whole time, a call stays open on his phone. George is aware of it even when he's at his foggiest, the golden voice on the other end of the line a common thread holding him together while his brain fights to pull him apart.

He wakes on the morning of the third day with a clear head and pain-free joints, and he thinks he might actually cry with relief.

"Oh my god, *finally*," he hisses, sitting up straight for the first time in days. The room stays normal, no longer spinning in a dizzy nightmare, and his neck is stiff but not on fire and his hands are no longer tingling. He cracks his knuckles and stretches out his spine. "Oh my *god*."

"George?" Dream's voice is there in seconds, muffled and hoarse with sleep. "Everything okay?"

"Did you just wake up?" George asks instead of answering, testing the limits of his brain. He can form sentences again, thoughts coming easily without having to battle through treacle, and he grins. "Fuck, I feel *amazing*."

"You do?" There's a rustle of sheets, and Dream's voice sounds a bit clearer. He's definitely just woken up, George thinks, and he leans over to where his phone is charging on his bedside table and checks the time - nine am, which means it's four in Florida. The timer on the call reads fifty-six hours, which is frankly ridiculous, but George's face warms all the same.

Dream hasn't hung up on him once. Not *once*.

"George, honey?" Dream's voice cracks with worry, and guilt fizzles through George's chest. "You really feel better?"

"Yeah, yeah, I do," he says quickly, itching to reassure Dream after he's stayed so vigilant for so long. He knows Dream won't have slept much, probably focused on listening to George without doing much else. He's sure if he checks twitter the fans will be wondering where they've been.

He's not sure he wants to tell them. He kind of wants to keep this side of Dream for himself.

Dream lets out a wheezy laugh that's mostly born of relief. "Thank fucking god. Jesus, I was going out of my mind for a little while there."

"Idiot," George says fondly, but he picks his phone up and turns his camera on, holding it up in front of his face. He still looks like a mess, his hair stuck to his forehead with dried sweat and his cheeks flushed red, but Dream's soft intake of breath is worth embarrassing himself once more.

After all, he's done much worse over the last couple of days.

"I'm really sorry," George says before Dream can start talking again.

He hears fuzzy concern in Dream's warm tone. "What for?"

"Worrying you. And, like." George thinks back to his needy complaints and constant demands for affection and grimaces. "For being a disaster."

Dream wheezes another laugh. Tea kettle, George thinks, and smiles like a reflex. He feels rubbed raw, exposed more than he'd like, and while part of him wants to clamp down tight on anything

remotely resembling *feelings* and shut himself away in a protective fortress again, he doesn't think he's going to. Dream deserves all of him, he gives away so much of himself, and George doesn't want to lose what they've built over the last couple of days.

He looks directly into the camera and says, "Thanks for, like. Putting up with me. And I still wanna do the kissing and the hand holding thing, for the record."

The way Dream chokes is worth any residual embarrassment. George grins.

"Thank god for that," Dream finally manages, an edge to his golden voice that's so tender it almost hurts. "If you tried to backtrack again I think I would have flown to the UK just to murder you myself."

George's heart stutters. "I'm not - I'm not gonna."

"I'm really glad, George, but just so you know, you can always say no. Like, it isn't gonna ruin our friendship if my crush on you is unrequited, don't do anything out of obligation."

George screws his face up, the desire to squish Dream coursing through his veins. He's such an *idiot* sometimes, so smart but so oblivious, and it strikes George how young Dream still is. Three years doesn't usually feel like a lot, but sometimes the responsibility catches him by surprise. Something as precious as Dream's heart needs to be handled with care.

He's going to make sure he's up to the job.

"You're stupid," he says, and hopes it conveys even half of the emotion bubbling up in his chest. "And I wanna kiss you. Also, you're supposed to be calling me honey."

Dream's warm laugh is like sunlight. George bathes in it after days in the dark.

"Okay, honey, I'm really glad you're feeling better." Dream hums, amusement obvious in his tone. "But you look gross. Go get in the shower."

"Charming," George huffs, rolling his eyes when Dream just laughs harder. "Go back to sleep, you must be exhausted."

"Nah, I'm fine."

"Dream." George levels the camera with a look - he might not be able to see Dream's face, but he knows how effective his glare can be. "Don't lie. You've stayed up for three days straight just to watch over me, haven't you?"

Silence holds for a few seconds before Dream gives in. "Okay, but like, you were actually dying, George. I had to make sure I didn't need to call you an ambulance."

"It was a migraine, not a fucking emergency."

"Oh, so you admit it was a migraine now?"

"No," George says quickly, and Dream heaves a dramatic sigh. "No, Dream, it makes no sense, I don't *get* migraines."

"The first one is always the worst," Dream says wisely. "I hope you don't have any more, but if you do, at least you'll know what's happening."

George remembers the flaring pain at the base of his skull, the constant throbbing behind his

temples, and scrunches his face up. “Never again. I refuse.”

“I don’t think that’s how it works.”

“Tough shit.” George rolls out of bed, forever grateful that the room doesn’t tip around him anymore. “Go to sleep. I’m getting in the shower.”

It’s a testament to how tired Dream must be that he doesn’t attempt to make a joke about seeing George naked, or something. George sets his phone on the side while he hunts down a fresh change of clothes, listening to Dream yawn through his words until he gives in and finally drifts off, soft snores echoing from George’s phone speakers.

George ends the call at 56:47. Officially their longest on record.

When he gets out of the shower and finds several messages from Sapnap, Karl, and a few of their other friends clogging up his Discord, George braves twitter and scrolls through some replies for a while - Dream tweeted from his private account two days ago, alluding to George sleeping for thirteen hours straight without directly saying why, leaving it up to George how much he wants to share. George is grateful for the explanation for his lack of streams.

He opens his own private account and types out a short tweet.

Surfaced from a 3 day migraine, they’re the worst wtf. But I’m alive. Mostly thanks to Dream :]

He sends the tweet and puts his phone down, letting his notifications flood with caps-lock replies while he turns his computer back on and returns to the plugin he was coding when this all started. His chest feels lighter, his heart warm.

He’s going to kiss Dream when he gets to Florida.

He smiles to himself, mouth stretched wide in the quiet loneliness of his apartment, and loses himself in code, content to wait for Dream to wake up again before he starts his day properly.

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

Thank you so much for all the lovely comments on part one! I'm so happy you folks liked the sickfic fluff, there's more where that came from here. I'm a chronic migraine sufferer so this fic is largely self-indulgent, and I'm glad others are finding some comfort in it too :)

Another warning for vomiting, again it's not too graphic but it does happen

Happy reading!

Come say hi, I'm on [tumblr](#) and [twitter](#)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

George doesn't have another migraine for almost four months.

He's finally in Florida when it happens again, and he could blame the humidity, or the air pressure from the flight, seeing as he's only been here two weeks when he wakes in the middle of the night to searing pain in the back of his skull and intense pressure building behind his eyes.

At first he thinks it's just jetlag - his sleeping pattern has always been all over the place, but the shift in timezone has still affected him, resulting in him taking frequent naps on the couch while Sapnap and Dream revolve around him in their usual routine. He's taken to shuffling through the house in his pyjamas and refusing to go outside while he's adjusting. Dream and Sapnap humour him, mostly.

He still wakes up at a normal time in the morning and goes to bed at a reasonable hour every night. Cuddles with Dream are too appealing to turn down.

George muffles a groan behind his hand when he attempts to sit up and the room spins dizzily around him. The world feels like it's off its axis, everything slanted at the wrong angle until he can't tell which way is up. His spatial awareness is off balance, too, because he hits Dream right in the chest when he reaches for the blankets, wanting to cocoon himself in softness.

Dream mutters an *ow* under his breath and rolls over without waking up.

Dream has been something of a revelation since George arrived in his new country, too. Not only does he actually have a face - a *nice* face - he's also every bit as warm and full-on as George imagined, always winding an arm around George's shoulders, clinging to his back while George plays Fortnite, sitting on the floor by his feet while George codes. They've barely spent any time apart since George moved in and he wouldn't want it any other way.

George has never slept in the room they'd set aside for him. Instead, he moved straight into Dream's room, which is now *their* room according to Dream, and seeing his clothes mixed with Dream's in the closet, their toothbrushes next to each other in the en-suite, never fails to send a tingle down George's spine.

There's been kissing, too. Some kissing. Not as much as George would like, but he struggles to ask

for what he wants and Dream is still cautious with him sometimes, as if he thinks George might freak out and run like a skittish wild animal. George wants to reassure him that he's not going anywhere, but he's not good with his words and two weeks hasn't been long enough to show him through his actions yet, especially when he's spent half of that time asleep.

It's good, though. Things are good. George spends all his time existing with his two favourite people in the world, and it's all he ever dreamed of when he was trapped in that sad, lonely flat in London. Sapnap never lets him forget how glad he is that George is finally here, constantly badgering him to stream together, and Dream even sits on the bed behind the green screen to join in sometimes.

George feels loved. He feels wanted. He's happy.

So when he wakes up to his head splitting open and his stomach churning with sickening nausea, the first thing he feels is betrayal.

This is meant to be the *good* part now, he thinks furiously, curling his hands in his hair. He's not meant to get sad or sick or scared anymore. Dream turns over again next to him, and George holds his breath, going completely still so he doesn't risk waking him up. It's one thing to be needy and vulnerable over a long distance phone call when he's feeling awful - it's another thing entirely for Dream to actually *see* him like this, to witness him falling apart and throwing up and being all gross and sweaty and embarrassingly clingy.

George kind of wants to claw his own skin off whenever he thinks back to that day in London (he still maintains it wasn't a migraine, but rather a reaction to working on code for too long. Dream just gives him an exasperated sigh whenever it comes up). While he's extremely pleased with the outcome, seeing as Dream calls him pet names all the time now and wraps him in cuddles at every opportunity, he still burns hot with mortification when he remembers what he'd said and done, how he'd practically begged for Dream's attention and whined for Dream to solve all his problems for him.

Dream teases him about it a lot, too. *We got together because you couldn't handle a headache without me holding your hand*, he laughs, and George hisses and jabs his fingers between Dream's ribs, *shut up, idiot, you're the actual worst*.

George loves him, but he also kind of hates him sometimes.

The sharp stabbing pain in George's skull starts spreading down his neck, and George traps a whine between his teeth. He tucks his knees into his chest and buries his face in his hands, grateful that it's well before dawn and the room is blessedly dark. His skin feels hot, sweat sticking his hair to his forehead. He kind of wants to dunk his head in ice water.

Then his stomach roils, bile rising up his throat, and George flies out of bed faster than he's ever moved in his life.

He's halfway to the ensuite before he reconsiders - Dream is a light sleeper, he's a chronic insomniac and George has accidentally woken him before over far less. The last thing in the world he wants is Dream to wake up and find George bent pathetically over the toilet, all gross. So before he gets to the bathroom he diverts, instead scurrying into the hall.

He doesn't take long to consider his options - he doesn't have the luxury of time with the way his stomach is churning. One good thing about the absolute mansion he's found himself living in is the sheer number of rooms, so he darts down the hall past Sapnap's door and takes the stairs two at a time, running into one of the downstairs bathrooms attached to a guest room that no one has

claimed yet. It's dark and cool and no one will think to look for him here.

He barely makes it in time, throwing himself onto his knees and bending over the toilet just before he throws up what little food remains in his system from last night's dinner.

He gags, absolutely hating the sensation of his stomach emptying itself. His throat burns, his head pounding against his temples, his skin on fire and every joint aching dully. His neck feels so stiff that he struggles to bend it.

He feels just like he did that day in London.

With tears drying on his cheeks and his stomach still heaving despite there not being anything left to throw up, George flops onto the floor and presses his hot face onto cool tiles, trying to calm his ragged breathing. He hasn't got his phone on him, it's still charging on Dream's nightstand he thinks, but he knows it must still be the early hours of the morning because the sun hasn't risen yet and they didn't go to bed until past one. He's exhausted, so he doesn't think he slept much.

He remembers feeling fine when he went to bed - perhaps a little grumpy, complaining at Dream about how loud the volume of the movie they'd all watched together had been while Dream wrapped him up in warm arms and pressed a kiss to the top of his head, but he's sure he'd have noticed the beginnings of a migraine. This feels like it came out of nowhere.

George scrunches his face up and sprawls like a starfish across the bathroom floor. At least it's dark in here. The house is silent, the other two occupants probably fast asleep with no clue that their third member is miserable and suffering.

For the first time since arriving, George feels alone.

He knows he could fetch Dream. If he finds the strength to somehow drag himself back up the stairs and into their room, he could wake Dream and burrow into his chest and make him take care of him just like he promised he would back when George was trapped in London. Dream probably *wants* to help him. He'll call George an idiot when he inevitably finds out what's happening.

But another, louder, more scared part of George wants to stay in the dark and hide. He reasons that Dream hasn't seen him like this before, that George showers more than ever since he arrived because he wants to make sure he's always at his best when Dream is watching his every move. The idea of *Dream* being the one to see George sweaty, sick, and vomiting makes him want to sink into the earth and never resurface.

He'll probably feel better soon, he reasons. He might not even have a migraine. He could have eaten something bad and, now he's thrown it up, that'll be the end of it. A quick nap and he can go back to bed and everything will return to normal. Dream never needs to know.

His head is on fire. George shucks his shirt off, the material far too scratchy against his skin even if it's one of his favourites to sleep in - and it's actually an old one of Dream's now he thinks about it, George stole it on his second night here. He balls up the soft jersey and sets it under his head as a makeshift pillow, breathing in the faint scent of Dream's shampoo and closing his eyes.

He drifts off like that, hoping that when he wakes everything will be back to normal.

A familiar voice is what drags George from his uneasy slumber. He stirs drowsily, regretting everything when he opens his eyes and sharp light stabs his vision. The world is blurry, the unfamiliar bathroom swimming around him, and he can't quite hold in a light groan when he

attempts to hide his face from the light and his neck sends shooting pain all the way down his spine.

The familiar voice sounds distant, but George feels it in his bones all the same.

“Nick? Honey? Where *is* everyone?”

Something sparks in George’s chest that he is just *honey* now, his name forever replaced by terms of endearment in Dream’s mouth. He smiles, but his face hurts and he muffles another groan into his borrowed shirt, staying as still as he can so that he doesn’t aggravate the thousand knives stabbing into the base of his skull.

“Sweetheart?” Dream calls again, his voice faint but pitched loud, and he must still mean George unless he’s found Patches because no one else gets that soft tone from Dream.

“Ohh, George?” Now he sounds like he’s in Manhunt. George stifles a weak snort.

This house is stupidly vast, Dream still sounds so far away, and for a second George wishes he would find him, that he’ll open the door and gather George into his arms and take him somewhere dark and cool to wait out the rest of his migraine.

Because it probably is a migraine, he knows. He just doesn’t want to admit it.

The door doesn’t open, and Dream’s footsteps grow more distant. George curls up in a ball. He’s done an excellent job at hiding himself away, and as much as part of him resents it, at least he won’t have to deal with the mortifying embarrassment of Dream seeing him so weak and pathetic. Plus, what if *Sapnap* is the one to find him? George knows he wouldn’t ever live that down.

He’s straining his ears, trying to listen to the faint sounds of Dream moving around, when his stomach suddenly cramps and nausea crashes over him in waves stronger than anything he’s felt so far. George whines, just about managing to haul himself upright before he’s throwing up again, but he misses the toilet this time and instead gets vomit all over the tiled floor. It’s dusty in here, but clean, seeing as no one has used this bathroom yet.

George’s stomach turns at the mess. He drags himself across the floor to the opposite wall, trying to reach for a towel or something to throw over it. He doesn’t have the strength to clean it up properly, not yet, but at least then he won’t have to look at it.

His skin feels clammy. He’s always hot in Florida, unused to the humidity even when Dream keeps the air con blasting, but this is a new level of discomfort. He wonders if he’s feverish. As far as he knows, migraines don’t do that, but he’s not exactly an expert and he has no technology nearby to google it, so he’s not sure. He’d better not *actually* be coming down with something, this is already bad enough.

He finds the towels folded neatly on the counter above the sink, freshly bought (by Dream’s mom, probably) and untouched. Pulling himself up to his feet to grab one almost finishes him off. His knees tremble violently and he loses his balance twice, the world spinning around him until he thinks he might throw up again. The light is still hurting his eyes, sunlight spilling in from the window over by the shower, and everything in here is white and stark and he *hurts*.

He wants to be in bed with Dream. He’s an idiot for ever thinking he could handle something like this alone.

George sinks back down to the floor as soon as he’s tossed the towel over the mess by the toilet. He feels *awful*, his body shaking with the effort of moving, his mouth dry as sandpaper, and his

head and neck so sore and stiff that he wants to cry. His eyes are burning even when he shuts them, the darkness behind his lids not enough to stop the stabbing pain, and he can't roll onto his front because every movement makes his stomach churn alarmingly. He doesn't want to throw up again.

He fumbles for the shirt and tosses it over his face, the soft material providing some relief from the bright sunlight. It smells like Dream. He really could cry.

He's not sure how long he stays like that, laying on his back and suffering, before he hears movement through the house again.

"There you are!" Dream sounds happy. George wants to squish him. "I thought I'd been abandoned."

"No, I'm here," Sapnap answers, closer than before - it sounds like he's in the hall, not far outside the guest room attached to the bathroom George has sought shelter in. If they're that close, maybe they will find George. He has mixed feelings about that. "I was in the bath, dude, you can cope without me for an hour."

"Not without you *and* George," Dream complains. "Did you steal one of my bath bombs?"

"Maybe..."

George wants to laugh, but when he tries his head throbs so badly that tears spring to his eyes. Dream has a vast collection of bath bombs, but somehow an encyclopedic knowledge of exactly how many of each type he has, because he notices as soon as one goes missing. George borrowed one in his first week and Dream berated him for three days. *You can use them, just ask me first... or even better, let me get in with you.*

George remembers how flustered he'd grown, his face warming, and shivers when he thinks of Dream's bright-eyed laugh and giant grin when he'd spluttered out something to do with it being Sapnap's fault.

"Have you seen him?" Dream's voice pulls him back to the present, his brain foggy, and he doesn't quite catch Sapnap's response. He does hear Dream's despondent sigh, though, feels his disappointment like a twist in his own gut. "Alright, never mind. Breakfast's in the kitchen if you want some."

Footsteps fade away, and George panics - he might not want to be seen like this, but the idea of continuing to suffer alone suddenly feels much worse. He whines as loud as he can, flailing out one arm to rap his knuckles on the wooden skirting board nearest his face.

The footsteps pause.

George smacks his hand against the wood again, grimacing when the resulting loud knock makes his head throb. He tries to speak, to announce his presence in some more obvious way, but the scratch of his voice in his throat makes his head and neck ache and all he manages is a faint groan.

It must be enough, because he hears the creak of a door and footsteps inside the guest room, and now he knows he's been discovered because he never bothered to fully close the adjoining door to the bathroom. His bare feet must be visible at the very least, pointing towards the door where he lies sprawled on the floor, pathetic and shivering.

He prays with all his might that it's not Sapnap.

A quiet gasp tells him it's Dream.

He's not really sure how much better that is, because he can *feel* eyes on him even when he's still got Dream's shirt thrown across his face. Hot embarrassment floods through George, his skin itching, and he wonders if the floor would kindly open up and swallow him whole just so he doesn't have to deal with the result of his own idiocy.

"Honey," Dream says, his voice strained with worry, and George feels movement, footsteps rushing across the tiles, a warm body crouching by his side. "Oh, George, what *happened*?"

He croaks out a groan, the stimulation hurting his head. Fingers stroke through his hair and George grimaces because he knows how gross and sweaty he is, and he contemplates trying to crane his neck away, but then Dream pulls the shirt off his face and George *yelps*. The sharp burst of sunlight stings so bad that his eyes water and he moves on instinct, curling towards Dream and burying his face in his thigh - the nearest part of him that he can reach.

Dream makes a confused noise, his hand cupping the back of George's head. George whimpers and shoves his face in the soft material of Dream's sweatpants, unable to deny that Dream's fingers scratching at his burning scalp feel good. His neck is stiff and sore, his stomach churning. He keeps his eyes squeezed shut.

"George?" Dream says softly. "Can you look at me, sweetheart?"

George shakes his head and groans when dizziness swamps him. "Can't see."

"The light?"

George mumbles an affirmative. Every vibration when he speaks sends sharp pain shooting through his neck and up the back of his skull, his throat desert dry and painful. Nausea roils his stomach and George whimpers. He will *not* throw up in front of Dream, he refuses.

Dream hums sympathetically, his other hand sliding down George's shoulder to rub soothing circles into his back. George still isn't wearing a shirt, and Dream's touch on his overheated skin feels like a lot, but it's a nice distraction to the churning in his stomach so he accepts it without complaint.

"You have a migraine," Dream states.

George grunts and shakes his head, hating himself when everything tilts as a result of the movement. "No, I don't get migraines," he rasps, and his voice sounds wrecked even to his own ears.

Dream shushes him with a soft snort. "Yeah, you don't get to be the expert today. Why are you hiding in a guest bathroom?"

George hides his face in Dream's lap and refuses to surface.

Unfortunately, Dream knows him better than anyone else on the planet, and it doesn't take much for him to correctly decipher what's been going on in George's brain. "You were embarrassed and wanted to handle it yourself, huh? Well, that looks like it's been working out really well for you."

George whines and hits him.

Much to his mortification, Dream *laughs*. While that's normally one of the most welcome sounds in the world, right now George thinks he could definitely squash Dream for daring to find his suffering *amusing*. He hits him again, weakly smacking the flat of his palm into Dream's knee.

Dream catches his wrist, clearly holding back more laughter. “Come on, let’s get you off the floor.”

“Can’t,” George grumbles.

“Well, you’re not spending the whole of the next three days down here. You need water and an advil and probably some food if you’ve been throwing up.”

George remembers the puddle of vomit poorly hidden under the towel and winces, mortified. His stomach is still cramping, nausea coming and going in waves, and he thinks if he tries to move he’ll get so dizzy that he’ll just throw up again. The idea of that happening in front of Dream is enough to make him panic.

Dream curls an arm around his back, attempting to help him sit up. George digs his fingers into Dream’s sweatpants and refuses.

“George, baby, come on.” Dream strokes the flat of his palm down George’s spine. The pet names sound so much better in person, and Dream can hold him and touch him instead of existing only as a disembodied voice on the other end of the phone, but George is still humiliated that he’s being seen like this so soon after getting to Florida. Dream has only had two weeks to adjust to George’s presence, it hasn’t been long enough to look like this much of a mess in front of him already.

Dream doesn’t seem to care, though, because he wraps both arms around George and lifts him bodily into his lap.

George squeaks. He’s still not used to how much bigger Dream is than him, and the effortless way he picks George up like he weighs nothing and deposits him into his lap has George’s insides glowing. The light stabs his eyes and he quickly hides his face in Dream’s shoulder, breathing in his familiar scent, like sleep and shampoo. His whole body shakes like a leaf in Dream’s hold.

“There, I’ve got you,” Dream murmurs.

“If I throw up on you, I will never forgive myself,” George hisses in response. He digs his fingers into the front of Dream’s shirt and does his best to keep his balance when the room spins around him.

Dream wheezes out a quiet laugh, one hand rubbing circles into George’s back. “You can throw up on me, I’m still not going anywhere.”

“It’s *gross*. I’m gross.”

“I don’t care,” Dream says casually, like it should be obvious and as if George hasn’t been freaking out about exactly that all morning. “I’m not gonna be mad at you for getting sick. I *am* mad that you snuck off and hid without waking me up, though.”

George groans. “Be mad at me later. Fix me now.”

“Oh, now you want my help?”

“*Dream*,” George whines, using every tool in his inventory to sound as vulnerable and needy as possible, knowing that Dream finds it impossible to say no to him. “Please, I feel bad.”

It works, for the most part. Dream caves, making a low, sympathetic noise in the back of his throat and gathering George into his arms. George squishes his face in the crook of Dream’s neck, sheltering from the blistering sunlight, and moans weakly.

“Aw, it’s okay, darling,” Dream soothes. “Let’s get you back to bed, hm? Then I can get you meds and food—”

“No,” George complains, digging his fingers possessively into Dream’s shirt. “No leaving.”

“You hid from me all morning and now you won’t let me leave you alone for five seconds?”

“Yes,” George says stubbornly.

Dream stifles a laugh into the top of his head, his breath ruffling George’s hair. George drinks in every sensation, every physical touch that he wasn’t able to get last time he felt this bad, and he’s grateful that this is his life now. Dream is always so warm, his chest is practically radiating heat when George nuzzles into him. It makes George feel sleepy.

“C’mon, silly thing,” Dream murmurs, so fond that George’s chest aches. “Let’s go get you your meds.”

George wants to complain that there is no way he’s moving of his own volition, but Dream reads his mind again and just scoops him up into his arms, starting to climb to his feet with George safely cradled against his chest. George squeaks, a rush of heat flooding through him - it really doesn’t escape his notice just how effortlessly Dream can manhandle him - but he has more pressing matters to worry about when his stomach starts churning alarmingly.

“Dream—” he gasps, curling a fist in the front of Dream’s shirt and tugging *hard*. “Gonna—”

“What is it, babe?” Dream stares down at him, eyes widening in understanding when George retches. He quickly sets George down in front of the toilet and George bends forward, humiliation stinging his face when he can’t stop himself from throwing up right in front of Dream.

Dream sits behind him, petting his hair back from his face and talking him through it. Large hands rub up-and-down George’s back, fingers trailing soothing patterns against his bare skin, and as much as George might want to become one with the wall and never have to face Dream again, he has to admit that it’s much nicer to have someone holding him while his stomach twists and his throat burns than dealing with it alone.

He blinks away tears, sitting back on his heels when he thinks he’s done, for now at least. Dream settles right behind him, pulling George back between his legs until he’s nestled against his chest. George squints at the sunlight, tired. “Hurts.”

“I’ll get you in the dark as soon as I can, love,” Dream promises. He reaches up and places one warm hand over George’s eyes, and between that and the new pet name, George melts. Any fight that was left in him drains away and he falls back against Dream, weak and quivering.

Love. That sounds really, really nice in Dream’s voice, especially when directed at George.

Dream holds him close, mindful to keep a hand over his eyes so that George has some protection from the light. “Do you think you’ll be able to keep hold of your stomach long enough for me to get you upstairs?”

George whines, squirming. “Fuck, I’m sorry—”

“Hey, hey, no apologising.” Dream’s tone turns almost stern, but his hand is as soothing as ever where he’s rubbing absent-minded circles into George’s back. “It doesn’t even matter if you do throw up on the way, I’ll clean it up later. I’m just asking if you’re ready to give it a try, or if you still feel too bad?”

George doesn't deserve him, he thinks. But he's too weak to put up much of a fight so he just nods into the crook of Dream's shoulder. "Can try."

"Good. I'll go slow, just like, hit me if you need to stop again."

"Hit you," George repeats under his breath, letting out a raspy snort. "You're, like, a rock. Can't hit you."

"I'm gonna take that as a compliment," Dream laughs. He gets a secure grip on George again and lifts him, cradling him against his chest while he gets to his feet. George turns willingly, hiding his face in Dream's shoulder while Dream adjusts his grip, making sure he's got George's legs hooked safely around his waist.

"Rock Dream," George mumbles, searching for a joke he's sure is in there somewhere. His brain hurts with the effort of thinking, but he gets there finally and feels inordinately proud of himself. "Clay! You *are* rock."

Dream bursts into light laughter, his chest vibrating right against George's ear. Tea kettle, George thinks, and grins. The noise makes George's head throb, but it's also a nice sound, familiar and golden, synonymous with home. "God, I missed delirious George."

"Not George."

"Honey, right, sorry," Dream corrects himself, and George can hear the smile in his voice. It makes him feel warm.

Dream carries him through the house like he's playing Parkour Warrior, dodging every creaky floorboard and avoiding the largest windows where sunlight spills into the bright, airy rooms. The thought makes George let out a pained giggle, muffled into Dream's shoulder where he has his face tucked into Dream's neck to protect him from the light. He complains when they don't immediately head for the stairs, though, furrowing his brow with a whimper when they step into the kitchen, which is flooded with morning sunlight.

"Sorry, but we need supplies," Dream apologises, lips close to George's ear.

George grumbles.

From somewhere behind them, George can hear the clatter of a spoon against a bowl and quiet, familiar breathing. Sapnap. George knows their sounds now, knows how each of their presence feels in a room, but right now his every sense is on high alert and his head aches dully with just the sensation of another human moving around.

"George, you look like shit," Sapnap says unceremoniously.

"He's got another migraine," Dream says, carrying George through the archway and into the living room.

"Another one?"

"No," George growls into Dream's shoulder. "I don't get migraines."

"So he's in denial too, huh," Sapnap says. There's a distant tug, and the room gets beautifully darker. George squints his eyes open to find Sapnap leaning over the counter to reach the blinds, pulling them firmly shut over the kitchen windows.

George sags in relief.

“Hold on two seconds,” Dream murmurs in his ear, juggling his weight while he reaches for the back of the couch. Then something large and deliciously soft is draped across George’s shoulders and up over his head, surrounding him in blissful, velvety darkness. George could actually cry at the relief it brings to his sore head.

“There.” Dream straightens, adjusting the blanket around George so that it’s fully covering his head, and then carries him back into the kitchen to set him down on the counter. “Stay here for five minutes while I grab things, okay?”

George mumbles an affirmative, happily rubbing the soft, fleecy blanket against his overheated skin. It feels like heaven.

He can hear movement around him, cupboards opening and the clink of a glass, before Sapnap says, sounding closer, “Why haven’t you put him back in bed?”

“Are you kidding? I can’t *trust* him,” Dream says indignantly. “He didn’t even wake me up this morning to tell me he was feeling bad. I had to find him in one of the *guest bathrooms*, can you imagine?”

“George,” Sapnap scolds. “No. Bad George.”

“Shut up, Sapnap,” George mutters back. The alliteration feels funny in his mouth, the shape of the words making him giggle for some reason. His tongue feels too big, like he can’t quite make it work properly, and he’s fairly sure he sounds drunk.

Footsteps cross towards him, and then a cold glass is shoved into his hand. Dream again, George can tell by the way he moves - broad, confident, casual. “Drink this. Sips, okay? We don’t want you throwing up again unless we have to.”

George wrinkles his nose. His entire head feels on fire when he bends his neck to drink, but the water does feel good on his dry lips, soothing some of the pain from his burning throat. He takes a greedy drink.

Long fingers wrap around his wrist, steadying him. “Easy. Not too much in one go, you’ll upset your stomach.”

“Spoilsport,” George mumbles, but obediently slows down. His other hand is picked up, two pills placed in his palm, and George takes them without further complaint, swallowing them down with a pained grimace and immediately drinking some more of the cool water.

He hears Dream give an approving hum above him and smiles. There’s something nice about having Dream take care of him, his steady presence a constant source of comfort while George feels like he’s floundering. He’s still going to be dying of embarrassment over this forever, but he figures he might as well enjoy it while it’s happening.

He leans forward, seeking touch, and flops into the nearest warm surface he comes into contact with - Dream’s right arm, as it turns out. Dream chuckles, shifting to stand near him while he rummages through something to George’s right, but George ignores him in favour of curling his hands around Dream’s arm and pressing his blanketed face right into his bicep.

“I’m taking pictures,” Sapnap announces.

George groans, about to yell his complaint, but his head throbs and he squeezes his eyes shut,

swallowing down another wave of nausea. His brain feels like it's trying to escape from his head, straining against his skull, and his thoughts melt into a congealed mess that even he can't make any sense of.

He fades in and out, vaguely aware of murmured conversation and the sounds and smells of food being cooked around him, but the scent just turns his stomach. He nuzzles into the warm body pressed against his, grateful that Dream is never more than a step away. He's an anchor while George feels like he might scatter into a million pieces, lost on the wind forever.

Eventually, Dream taps him on the knee, rousing him from his stupor. "Honey? Time to go upstairs, can you walk?"

George thinks about supporting himself on his own legs, thinks about the alternative where he could be curled up in Dream's strong arms, and shakes his head.

Sapnap snorts. "Lazy shit."

"Fuck off," George snaps back, but it comes out sounding garbled. He doesn't recognise his own voice, his ears going fuzzy, and the room tilts around him when he flails a punch in the direction of Sapnap's voice.

Dream steadies him with a firm hand on his shoulder. "Alright, I got you. Nick, can you carry this upstairs?"

"Sure, as long as you deal with... all of that." Sapnap sounds uncertain, and Dream lets out a snicker, the hand on George's shoulder drifting to stroke down his back.

"Nick just pointed at you, George."

"Fuck him," George mumbles, leaning into Dream's touch. "He should - he should try and speak with a migraine."

"Ah, so it *is* a migraine." Dream sounds triumphant.

George shakes his head and immediately hates everything when the room spins dizzily around him. His neck burns with pain and he's bone-tired, itching for a flat surface and a warm body to curl up against.

"You have the neediest boyfriend in the world," Sapnap says, and George can almost hear his eye roll.

George summons up a grin with effort. "Yep. I do."

"Idiot, he didn't mean *you*," Dream huffs, but there's a smile in his voice and a warm undercurrent to his tone that George can't quite detect. He wraps his arm more securely around George's back and tucks his other one under his knees, picking him up bridal-style this time.

George would complain, but it feels *really* nice to let Dream do all the work. He snuggles into his chest with a content sigh.

"Definitely taking pictures," Sapnap says gleefully from somewhere in front of him.

George kicks out one leg and smirks when his bare foot connects with warm skin. Sapnap yelps.

"Behave," Dream chides, but it's gentle. He carries George through the house, and now that

George is tucked securely under the blanket, he's shielded from the light and he feels a lot more alive. He thinks the tablets are starting to kick in, too - the pain isn't quite as intense, and he no longer feels on the verge of throwing up, though his stomach is still unsettled.

Dream holds him like he's precious, taking each step carefully while he climbs up the stairs and down the hall into his - *their* - bedroom. He lays George down on the bed, the mattress wonderful under his aching joints, and George stretches with a needy whine, reaching out for Dream when he doesn't immediately join him.

From somewhere far away, Sapnap groans. "I didn't really need this mental image."

Dream snorts. "He's literally under a blanket, you can't even see anything."

"Yeah, well, you guys are like my brothers, so while I support the fact that you've finally sorted out your shit, I don't need to witness the making out or whatever else goes on in here, got it?"

"Making out," George repeats, grumbling. "There's not nearly enough of that."

Somewhere above him, Dream chokes.

"This is what I *mean*," Sapnap complains. "Though, to be fair, Dream, it sounds like you're not really doing your job properly."

"What?!"

"I'm just saying, you moped for months before George finally got here. If he's in your bed and you're not taking advantage of every available second—"

"Exactly," George pouts, rolling onto his side. He dares to peek out from under his blanket, relieved to find that Dream has pulled the curtains firmly shut and the room is bathed in pleasant darkness. The door is open, and the slither of sunlight from the hall is enough to illuminate Sapnap's stocky frame standing on the threshold, arms crossed, cocky smirk on his face.

Dream stands above the bed just to George's left, spluttering. The look on his face is priceless. George lets out a snort, then whines when his head screams in resultant pain.

Dream turns to look down at him, huffing out a breath through his nose. "Serves you right. That's karma in action."

"M'just saying," George grumps, curling up in a ball and clutching his head. "Sapnap has a point. Kiss me more."

Dream's eyes go wide.

"And that's my cue to leave," Sapnap sing-songs, his grin wicked. He sets a tray down on the desk, which looks like it contains a few bottles of water, a box of pills, and an apple, among other confusing objects George can't quite make out, and steps out the door. "You're welcome, George."

George tries to free one hand from his tangle of blankets to flip him off, but the door shuts behind him before he manages it.

Silence falls for a few seconds after he's gone. George rolls over, fighting the blankets he's somehow trapped himself in, and shoves his hot face into the nearest pillow. It smells like Dream, much to his satisfaction. "I'm literally dying. That's the only explanation for any of this."

“You sound a lot more coherent, actually,” Dream says with a soft chuckle. The bed dips beside George and he immediately rolls over to seek out Dream’s touch, but he gets stuck in a tangle of sheets and hisses, frustrated. Dream rolls his eyes, reaching down to help free him from the blankets knotted around his ankles. “You are an actual child, how did you manage to do this?”

“I am *older* than you.”

“Act like it, then.”

“I do,” George gripes. “You can’t hold what I do when I’m sick against me.”

Dream raises both his brows, his grin visible even in the darkness, and George knows what’s coming next before he even says it.

“Oh, so I’m not meant to listen to what you say when you’re sick?”

“Dream,” George warns, but he’s interrupted.

“So you *don’t* want to date me, then? Seeing as you only actually confirmed that when you were ill.” Dream’s tone is far too pleased with himself as he settles against the headboard, long legs stretching across the bed. He looks unfairly good even with tangled bedhead and creased pyjamas. “And that thing just now, about the kissing? You didn’t mean that either?”

George narrows his eyes into a glare, relieved that the darkness coating the bedroom allows him to properly study Dream’s features now his eyes no longer feel like they’re seconds away from falling out of his skull. “You’re the one that said you wanted to do the kissing and the handholding thing on days when I’m not sick, and you don’t.”

“I hold your hand all the time!”

“Not *enough*,” George grumps, heaving himself up onto one elbow with an enormous amount of effort. He fixes Dream with a hard stare. “And you’ve kissed me, like, twice.”

“It’s been more than twice,” Dream argues, pursing his lips.

“Two separate occasions, then. One, when I first came home and walked in the door,” George starts to list, but his arm shakes underneath him, so he drags himself across the mattress to wriggle onto Dream’s lap, giving up halfway there and just half-heartedly falling across Dream’s thighs. He accepts his new position without question. “I walked in the door, and you—”

“Swept you off your feet?” Dream says, grinning.

George swats at his knee. “Picked me up and kissed me, idiot. Made me drop my suitcase too, I broke one of the wheels.”

“I still maintain that could have happened on the plane.”

“Whatever. That was one. Two: when I got in the pool for the first time and you saw me with my hair wet.”

“Your hair looks good curly,” Dream shrugs, nonchalant. “And that wasn’t just one kiss. It was, like, twenty kisses.”

“No it wasn’t.”

“Yeah, it was.”

“No, it - never mind.” George’s head hurts. He sticks his face into Dream’s soft stomach. “It was still only one occasion. You’ve kissed me twice since I got here.”

Dream hums. He lifts a hand to cup the back of George’s head, fingers carding through his hair, and George melts into the mattress. He can talk without his skin burning or his tongue feeling weird, but his head is still incredibly sore and his joints complain every time he so much as shifts an inch. He tries to wiggle further onto Dream’s lap, but gives up after a couple of seconds, in too much pain.

Luckily, Dream’s telepathic link is still working perfectly. He gathers George into his arms and lifts him, sinking down the bed until he’s on his back and can tuck George comfortably under his chin. George sprawls out on top of him, content to be horizontal and in Dream’s arms.

“I wasn’t, like,” Dream starts, then cuts himself off.

George makes a noncommittal noise to show he’s listening.

“It’s not like I don’t wanna kiss you more,” Dream continues after a minute, one hand resting warm on George’s upper back, fingers tapping a rhythm against his bare skin. “You’re just - you deserve, like an *occasion*.”

George squints. “A what?”

“I don’t know if you’ve noticed, but kissing you is kinda momentous for me, George,” Dream says dryly. “It’s just - hard to believe I really get to do that whenever I want. I feel like I should be buying you flowers and taking you on fancy dates every time I want to kiss you, or I haven’t earned it.”

Silence falls again while George digests that. Dream, he concludes, is an idiot, and he thinks about the best way to get that across without using too many words or jostling his head and neck too badly. He settles for snaking a hand up under Dream’s shirt, ignoring his hitched breath, and digging his fingers mercilessly between his ribs where he has learned that Dream is ticklish.

“What the - *fuck, George!*” Dream yells, and a sharp jab of pain attacks George’s skull at the loud noise so close to his ear, but it’s entirely worth it. Dream bats at him, legs kicking as he squirms and laughs, quickly turning to putty under George’s hands.

Interesting. George files away the feeling of Dream going pliant beneath his touch for another occasion and relents, flopping back onto Dream’s chest when he runs out of energy far too soon. He’s still dizzy, and his stomach twists with sharp pain. He makes a face.

“What was that for?” Dream says indignantly, still catching his breath.

“You’re an idiot. You don’t have to buy me flowers every time you want to kiss me.”

“Okay, but.” Dream cards a hand through George’s hair. “*Could I?*”

“What? *No*, Dream, don’t be *stupid*.”

“I’d fill this house with roses for you if you’d let me.”

“Oh my god.” George’s insides feel warm and fuzzy, and something strange and wriggly is happening to his heart. He thinks he might actually be glowing, but he will never ever let Dream see the effect he’s having, so he leans up to shove his face in the crook of Dream’s neck and bites at his shoulder.

Dream huffs. "Why are you attacking me again?"

"Because you're so cute I want to squish you."

Dream blinks, startled.

George swallows around a dry throat, suddenly nervous. He didn't really mean to say that out loud - he was thinking it very hard, but he wanted to say *you're so stupid or stop being ridiculous or Sapnap will hate you if you get me flowers but not him.*

Then he thinks about Dream buying Sapnap flowers and wrinkles his nose.

"You wanna squish me," Dream repeats slowly, like he's checking that he heard right. "And you - you think I'm cute?"

George groans. He tilts his chin up just enough to meet Dream's eyes in the darkness, squinting even in the faint bits of sunlight that fight their way through Dream's blackout blinds, and studies his face for a second - a face he wondered about for so long. It's unremarkable in many ways: wide green eyes that look yellow to George, wavy hair just a shade too light to be called brown, a straight nose and a sharp jawline, a tiny scar on his chin from an old football accident.

After Dream face revealed, the internet broke for a couple of days, and George wholeheartedly understands that reaction. He would quite like to spend the rest of his life staring at that face.

He still reaches up and flicks Dream right in the centre of his forehead.

"Ow." Dream whines, catching George's wrist to stop him from doing it again. "What is *wrong* with you?"

"I have a migraine," George deadpans, and collapses back onto Dream, his arms turning into the consistency of noodles. He can feel his whole body quivering when Dream tightens his grip around his shoulders. "And you're actually so stupid that you're making it worse."

"I was literally just asking if you think I'm cute, how is that stupid?"

George gives him a withering look.

"What?"

"You can't be that dumb." George closes his eyes. "Cute is, like - only the *beginning* when it comes to you. Have you ever looked in a mirror at any point in your life? Or watched yourself back in videos? *Idiot.*"

A startled silence falls for two seconds, and then Dream is laughing so hard that his chest vibrates under George. George grumbles, digging his fingers into Dream's shirt to keep his balance, but Dream moves him before he has the chance, rolling onto his side and curling an arm over George's hip so they're facing each other, heads sharing the same pillow.

Dream beams at him, his eyes scrunched up. "You think I'm cute."

"Whatever."

"And you wanna kiss me more."

"Mm." George is not entirely unaffected by Dream saying that so close to his face, with one large hand tapping an absent rhythm into the bare skin just above his hip. His face feels like it's on fire,

and not just from the migraine this time, but he decides his embarrassment is worth it to see the way Dream's nose scrunches with happiness, his eyes bright in the dark room.

"You know, you should get sick more often," Dream says conversationally, his tone clearly joking. "You're sweet like this."

George bites down hard on his inner cheek and takes advantage of the vulnerability that comes with letting Dream take care of him in his hour of need. "Okay, but you - you do know that I always mean it, don't you?"

Dream meets his eyes, inches away. "Indulge me."

Despite the pain in his skull, George cracks a smile. "I can't always - everything is a *lot*, with you. It was a lot before, when you were just a voice on a phone, but now you're here and I can touch you and watch your face and stuff. It's scary, how much you make me feel."

Dream's gaze softens. The hand on George's hip swipes a path up his side, settling in the hollow between his ribs. It's nice, grounding, and George takes a deep breath and keeps talking.

"You talk about buying me flowers, and like - you say I love you all the time—"

"Because I do," Dream interrupts, grinning. "I love you a lot."

George flushes. "Yeah. And I - it's not as easy for me to just, like, *say it*. You're so obvious, and when I think about you following me around like a fucking golden retriever, or I mention I want a jumper and then it shows up in the post the next day, it's like - god, I just want to squash you."

Dream blinks at him. "Squash me."

"Yeah," George says. "Because you - you're so *much*. And you make me feel things. Lots of things. I kinda hate it."

Dream's grinning - George can hear it in his voice, catch a glimpse of it in the tiny slithers of sunlight invading their cosy dark den. "Tell me more about these feelings."

George shoves him, but it's weak. He closes his eyes and burrows his head into Dream's chest, letting out a soft sigh when Dream's arm immediately tightens around him, holding him safe and secure.

George is safe. He might feel exposed and rubbed raw, but it's just Dream, and Dream creates a web of security that George knows he can sink into forever, if he just lets himself.

He takes a breath and says: "I've been in love with you for a really long time."

He feels Dream go still.

"And, like." George swallows, gesturing vaguely with his hand between them. His head aches, his chest squeezing around the flood of nerves that swamps his already nauseous stomach, but he's come this far and he's not going to back down now. "That's a big feeling, and I don't like big feelings, so it's easier to just. Put it away. Lock it in a corner of my mind and not think about it too much, and poke fun at you instead. But then something will happen, like I'll get sick, or I'll move to Florida and you'll have this *grin*, and it's like the lock breaks and suddenly I can't think about anything else."

Dream's free hand flies up to George's hair, twisting through the strands like he's searching for

something to anchor himself. George can feel his breath shake when he says, “Really?”

“Yeah. I guess that’s why I hid from you earlier, when I woke up feeling bad,” George confesses with a sheepish smile. “I know what I’m like when I’m sick, and I hate it because I can’t hide anything from you.”

Dream cups his cheek. “I don’t want you to hide from me.”

“I know. I don’t want to either.”

“Are you sure about that?”

“Yes,” George says without hesitation. “It’s just - it’s just a lot. I look at you and my chest gets full, and then it’s like - how do I even put that into words, anyway? There *aren’t* words for the way I feel about you. So I try to show it instead, but then I get sick and need you and I can’t hide it anymore.”

“Which is why you whine so much,” Dream realises slowly, his tone laced with amusement, and George loves him for it. Loves that he can take George seriously while keeping the mood light, that he knows just how to create the perfect atmosphere for George to blossom.

And George, George can feel himself blooming.

“I whine because when I feel bad, I just, like - need you to hold me and make it better.” George makes a face. “And it’s different for you, you’re like that all the time—”

“Hey!” Dream squawks.

“Please, Dream, you have such an obvious thing for praise—”

“*George!*”

“—And you need my attention on you, like, always, and you get so jealous if I spend five minutes talking to anyone else.” George grins. “It’s even more obvious since I got here. You follow me from room to room even if we’re doing different things.”

“Shut up,” Dream whines, and George laughs and pets Dream’s hair.

“That’s what I mean, though. You’re needy all the time, and I love that, I love being there for you and giving you what you need. That’s comfy. But when...” he bites his lip. “When it’s *me* that needs *you*, that’s when I struggle.”

Dream hums. “You just don’t like feeling vulnerable.”

George pauses. His fingers go still in Dream’s hair until Dream makes a noise of complaint and nudges against him, and then George resumes carding through the strands, tangled waves under his touch still new but somehow familiar.

“I think you just need stability,” Dream continues after a second, and George holds his breath because Dream *knows him*, he can reach into the parts of George that even George himself hasn’t fully examined and bring them into perfect clarity. “You’ll open yourself up to me and realise that the world doesn’t come crashing down if you accept some help once in a while.”

George swallows. His mouth runs dry.

“I think that’s what it is, George,” Dream tells him, reading him perfectly as always. “You need to

know that you can have something good without the ground falling away beneath your feet.”

George bites down hard on his lower lip. His eyes are stinging, and his head is pounding, and his chest swims with *emotions* that he’s never quite sure how to deal with. He sticks his face in Dream’s shirt and mumbles, “You make me feel safe.”

“I know.” Dream chuckles when George makes a confused sound. “I know you might think you’re all mysterious and enigmatic, honey, but I can read you like a book. And you threw up in front of me earlier.”

George groans, embarrassed.

Dream chuckles, rubbing a soothing circle into his cheek with his thumb. “You let me pet your hair and you demand to be carried around when you don’t wanna walk. You’re actually pretty transparent too, once I learned how to speak George language.”

“You’re just a simp for me.”

“Yes,” Dream says, unabashed, confident. George bites his lip and wonders how words come so easily to him, and he wonders if he can borrow a bit of that bravery and dig his way down into the safety net Dream is offering, to discover just who they might be if he lets himself fall.

“Keep pushing me,” George says, scratching at Dream’s scalp and watching the way he melts under George’s touch. “Like - when I’m being difficult.”

“Ah, so you admit to being difficult?”

“I’m sick, you can’t hold it against me.” George bites his lip. “But yes.”

Dream wheezes out a soft laugh. The hand on George’s cheek is warm, and it feels like security, like home.

“And kiss me more,” George adds after a minute, and Dream grins at him, bright and beautiful.

“That, I can get behind.”

“Good. Idiot.” George sticks his face in Dream’s chest and closes his eyes, his head pounding. He’s sore and exhausted and he thinks he could sleep for a thousand years, but he manages one final thought before he succumbs to the tiredness weighing him down.

“You know, if I need to have a migraine every time I need you to stop being an idiot, then I’m gonna suffer for a very long time.”

Dream snickers, a hand carding through George’s hair. “The solution is to *talk to me*, George.”

“Or you could work on your mind-reading.”

“Oh, I would love that. I could eavesdrop on all the times you secretly think about me, prove that you’re just as obsessed as I am.” Dream sounds excited all of a sudden, laughter bubbling in his tone. He rolls onto his back, bringing George with him so that he’s cradled against his chest, and George feels safe and loved and *overwhelmed*, but he thinks he can cope with it.

He knows he wants to.

Instead, he tells Dream, “Shut up and hug me.”

Dream laughs like a tea kettle and holds him close, and George slips back into sleep content in the knowledge that Dream understands him, and that's really all that matters in the end.

George stirs awake to the feeling of bile climbing up his throat.

He lets out a panicked groan that comes out sounding more like a whine, thrashing for the few seconds it takes him to figure out what's going on. He's in bed, in Dream's arms, and his migraine is still raging if the pain in his skull and the stiff soreness of his neck is anything to go by. Even the soft blankets feel too rough against his burning skin.

Then his stomach churns and his body is wracked with a retch, and George leaps out of bed so fast the room tilts around him and he topples sideways.

He catches himself against the wall, halfway to the door already, when a thought freezes him in his tracks.

He doesn't want to hide from Dream.

Dream's been holding him non-stop since he found George on the bathroom floor however many hours ago, force-feeding him slices of apple whenever George briefly stirs awake and making him take his pills at regular intervals. George already misses the feeling of his arms around him, hands in his hair, soothing touches rubbed into his back, and his breath hitches. He doesn't want to cry alone on a bathroom floor again. He wants *Dream*.

His stomach churns. He doesn't have time to deliberate, so he follows his instincts without question for once and spins on his heel, crashing into the en-suite without a second thought and bending over the toilet as he throws up what little remains in his stomach.

He's not quiet about it, deliberately knocking into the wall, not masking the squeak of the door or the bang when it smacks against the wall from his violent shove to open it, so it only takes Dream a few seconds to wake up. George is still leaning over the toilet when he hears a confused murmur from somewhere behind him.

His chest squeezes tight, fear clutching at him. *You can't let him see you like this.*

Yes, I can, George tells the quiet voice in his head, and sinks back on his heels. He wipes his mouth with the back of his hand, not bothering to rub the tears from his eyes when he hears the mattress creak and footsteps pad across the carpet, Dream's familiar presence drifting towards him.

"Oh, baby," Dream murmurs, his voice low from sleep. He drops down by George's side, and George doesn't hesitate to crawl across the tiled floor towards him. Dream opens his arms and George burrows his way into them, shivering for more than one reason when Dream picks him up and puts him in his lap.

"I got you," Dream says sleepily, leaning back against the wall.

George swallows. "Sorry for waking you."

"Don't be stupid, darling. Well done for not being an idiot and running away again."

George digs his fingers into Dream's ribs, satisfied when he yelps and squirms away, batting at George's hands with a pained whine. "Okay, *now* you have something to apologise for."

“No,” George says, voice hoarse. “You deserve it.”

“You’re so *mean* to me.”

“‘M’not,” George answers tiredly, hiding his face in Dream’s neck. He’s exhausted, weariness sinking bone-deep until he doesn’t think he can lift his arms without collapsing, and his head hurts and he feels sick and he’s tired of it. He wants to feel better, he wants to be able to open his eyes without his head splitting open, and he wants the gross taste gone from his mouth.

One of those is easier to solve than the others, he thinks. He waves a hand towards the sink in an exhausted flap and hopes Dream can read his mind.

Dream, luckily, is as attuned as ever. “What is it, hm? You want water?”

George mumbles something inaudible and flaps his hand again.

“Let me get you your glass. You can brush your teeth too if you want, hm? I bet that’ll make you feel better.”

“God, I love you,” George mutters, sinking into Dream when he feels Dream start to move.

Dream lets out a light, startled laugh. “Now I know you’re *really* sick.”

“Shut up. I meant it, I—” George loses his train of thought and scrunches up his face, trying to catch it again. “You - you, like, read my mind, and I - uhh - I was gonna say something but—”

“Shh, stop thinking, babe, you’re gonna hurt yourself.” Dream sounds terribly amused, and George whines, too tired to hit him, but he thinks about it really loudly in case Dream can still read his mind.

Dream just chuckles. He gathers George into his arms and gets to his feet, setting George down on the edge of the bath while he disappears for a second. When he returns, he’s armed with a glass of water and toothpaste, and he forces two more pills into George’s palm, crossing his arms when George gripes at him.

“It’s for your own good, George.”

“Don’t wanna,” George says petulantly.

Dream clicks his tongue. “Stop being a baby and take them.”

“What will you give me if I do?”

Dream heaves a sigh, but he can clearly tell he’s fighting a losing battle - that or he’s just easy for George, because he offers, “I’ll edit your next video for you.”

George considers this. “Next five videos?”

“Oh my god, what? *No*—”

George purses his lips. “Then I won’t take the pills.”

“George,” Dream huffs, exasperated. “It’s to make *you* feel better.”

George just crosses his arms and glares up at where Dream is towering over him. The edge of the bath is cold through his sweatpants, and his head is swimming, and he wants to see just how far he

can push Dream before he caves.

Today is not the day he gets to find out, because no more than ten seconds pass before Dream heaves a sigh and shoves the pills under his nose. “Fine. I’ll edit your next three videos, final offer, don’t even *think* about pouting at me.”

George grins, triumphant, and takes the pills.

“You’re a menace,” Dream tells him, but George can see the hint of his smile through the moonlight reflected off the mirror, his teeth flashing white and his eyes warm.

George just hums and sips at his water.

When he’s brushed his teeth and washed his face, with Dream standing right behind him the whole time to help him keep his balance while the world sways around him, George feels marginally more alive. He still insists that Dream carries him back to bed, raising his arms and giving a pathetic whine when Dream takes a step towards the door without him.

Dream lifts both his brows, turning to survey George with an amused grin. “Something you wanna ask me?”

George just clicks his tongue and flaps his hands.

“Words, George. You gotta talk to me if you want something.”

“Don’t be stupid,” George complains. “You can clearly see what I want.”

“But we’re practising healthy communication,” Dream points out, his grin stretching wide when George lets out a muffled groan. “You can ask me for what you need without feeling bad about it, sweetheart.”

George’s heart stutters in his chest because, while he can still hear the lighthearted joke in Dream’s tone, there’s a note of sincerity underlying it that makes him want to grab Dream’s cheeks and squish them. He feels perceived and he’s not sure what to do about it.

Dream just smiles at him, his presence as sturdy and comforting as ever, and George decides to trust him.

“Carry me,” George announces, opening his arms. “Back to bed. And then don’t let go until I feel better.”

“There you go,” Dream praises, crossing straight back over to him and scooping George up into his arms. He’s as warm as ever, the scent of his shampoo lingering in the bathroom, and George can’t help but nestle as close as he can, sleepily resting his head against Dream’s collarbone and closing his eyes.

Dream lays him down on the bed and comes crawling up the mattress beside him, and George rolls into him instantly, seeking warmth and comfort and *home*. Dream called it *coming home* when George walked through the front door of this house for the first time, but George doesn’t really think his home is a building or a state or even a continent. It’s Dream, the person smiling at him with eyes heavy with sleep, who woke up without question as soon as George stirred and once stayed on the other end of a call for fifty-six hours just because George needed him.

George feels it, all the emotions welling up inside him, building in his chest until he can’t contain them anymore, and he thinks he might burst. He takes a deep breath, but there are no words to

describe what he's feeling, so he stays quiet.

He leans up instead, tilting his face towards Dream's in the quiet stillness of their bedroom, and presses their lips together.

Dream makes a questioning sound, so George kisses him again, curling one hand around Dream's cheek while he tucks himself warm and small into Dream's chest. Dream returns the kiss this time, but he still seems confused, so George pulls back after a second and pokes a finger into the centre of his chest.

"See? No need for roses, idiot."

Dream snickers. He cards a hand through George's hair when George flops back against his chest, running out of energy. "Okay, but like, I *would* buy you so many roses if you let me."

"Dream," George warns.

"The look on your face would be priceless, too. Imagine if you came down one morning and I'd put vases on every surface - like, all over the kitchen counter, and on the coffee table, and on the breakfast bar, and—" Dream wheezes a chuckle, clearly getting caught up, and George wants to hate him but his chest feels too fuzzy. "—And I could even put one on Patches, and—"

"How the fuck would you do that, idiot?"

"She can wear one of her cute sweaters and I'll tuck it in the collar," Dream insists. "It would *work*, George, don't laugh—"

"You're such an *idiot*," George snorts, and Dream shoves him, wheezing out a laugh so loud that George's head hurts.

"It would work. She'd be sitting on the counter and you'd walk in and you'd turn bright red, oh my god, and you'd get that angry look on your face like you do whenever you see something cute—"

"I do *not*!"

"And you'd start yelling at me, but your eyes would go all crinkly and you'd be secretly grinning," Dream continues, "and Sapnap would take loads of pictures—"

"He is *not* allowed to be there while you're showering me with flowers," George grumps, and Dream snorts and wraps his arms around George and *squeezes*.

"So you'd let me? Buy you flowers, I mean?"

"If Sapnap wasn't there," George huffs, and he can feel the smile Dream presses into his hair.

"Okay, just for you. You don't like sharing, huh?"

"Coming from *you*?"

"Okay," Dream starts, then snorts, his fingers tapping a distracted rhythm against George's ribs.

"Alright, so I can buy you flowers as long as you're the only one who gets to see them?"

George purses his lips and tucks his face into the crook of Dream's neck, where it's warm and dark and wonderfully safe. Then he murmurs, so low that he's not sure Dream can hear him, "Yes."

Dream hears him, of course. He cheers.

George hits him.

“You can’t fool me, George,” Dream snickers, carding a hand through George’s hair. “You might pretend to hate it, but you’re just as sentimental as I am. I saw the quartz elephant on the desk in your office.”

George bites his lip. He thinks about opening packages on his own in the UK, touching objects that he knew Dream touched first, listening to regular breathing on the other end of a call while his chest ached with yearning, and takes a breath.

He tilts his chin up and meets Dream’s eyes, warm even in the velvety darkness, and his chest floods with warmth. He lets himself feel it, basks in it, emotion coursing from the tips of his ears right down to his toes.

He leans up and kisses Dream again.

Dream hums, content, and winds his fingers through George’s hair, kissing him back as gentle as anything. It’s chaste, and soft, and still somehow too much. George wouldn’t change it for the world.

I love you, he thinks, and hopes Dream can hear him.

He falls asleep just like that, cuddled in Dream’s arms with Dream nuzzling his hair, and when he surfaces a few hours later with a clear head and the last vestiges of his migraine slipping away, the warmth in his chest remains, glowing like a talisman that he’ll never be without.

Dream’s still sleeping when he turns to face him, eyes closed, lips slightly parted, a snore escaping him every other breath. George just watches him for a while, his heart thudding between his ribs, and he lets himself feel.

He feels a lot around Dream, but every day it gets easier, and he knows he isn’t going to hide anymore.

He curls a hand in Dream’s hair and tugs, moulding their bodies together until Dream is tucked against him, his head in George’s chest, their legs tangled under the blankets, and George closes his eyes and basks in the knowledge that he’s finally come home.

THE END

Chapter End Notes

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